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VOL. 8
COVER A
MICHAEL TURNER'S
FATHOM
#1
OF 6
IT ALL STARTS HERE!
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"Anika"

script Vince Hernandez

pencils Mauricio Campetella
digital inks Mark Roslan

colors Peter Steigerwald
& Natalia Nesterenko

lettering Zen

Fathom Volume Eight
Issue 1 of 6

Fathom created by: Michael Turner | The Black co-created by: Michael Turner & Peter Steigerwald

Editors: Gabe Carrasco, Frank Mastromauro Design and Production: Mark Roslan Lettering fonts designed by: Robin Spehar, Comicraft, Blambot

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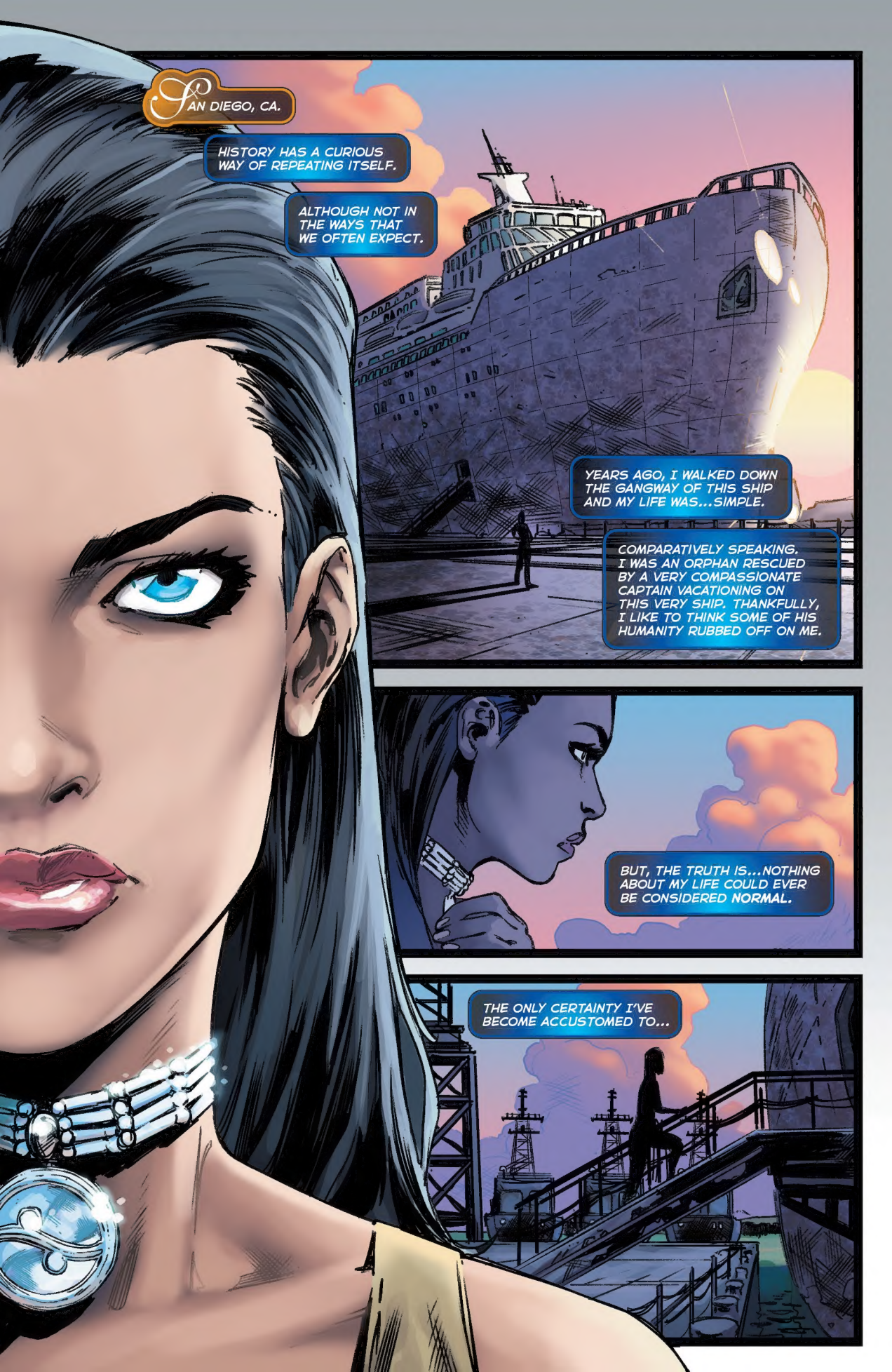

SAN DIEGO, CA.
HISTORY HAS A CURIOUS WAY OF REPEATING ITSELF.
ALTHOUGH NOT IN THE WAYS THAT WE OFTEN EXPECT.
YEARS AGO, I WALKED DOWN THE GANGWAY OF THIS SHIP AND MY LIFE WAS...SIMPLE.
COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING. I WAS AN ORPHAN RESCUED BY A VERY COMPASSIONATE CAPTAIN VACATIONING ON THIS VERY SHIP. THANKFULLY, I LIKE TO THINK SOME OF HIS HUMANITY RUBBED OFF ON ME.
BUT, THE TRUTH IS...NOTHING ABOUT MY LIFE COULD EVER BE CONSIDERED NORMAL.
THE ONLY CERTAINTY I'VE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO...

...IS THAT EVERYTHING IS ALWAYS UNCERTAIN.

KILLIAN.

YOUR PRESENCE IS CULPABLE, ***ASPEN.*** I COULD SENSE YOUR ARRIVAL.

YOUR ***ELITE*** ESSENCE.

YOU SENT WORD TO MY FATHER, CAPTAIN MATTHEWS. IT'S NOT INTUITION.

YOUR FATHER?

WHY ARE YOU ABOVE LEVEL?

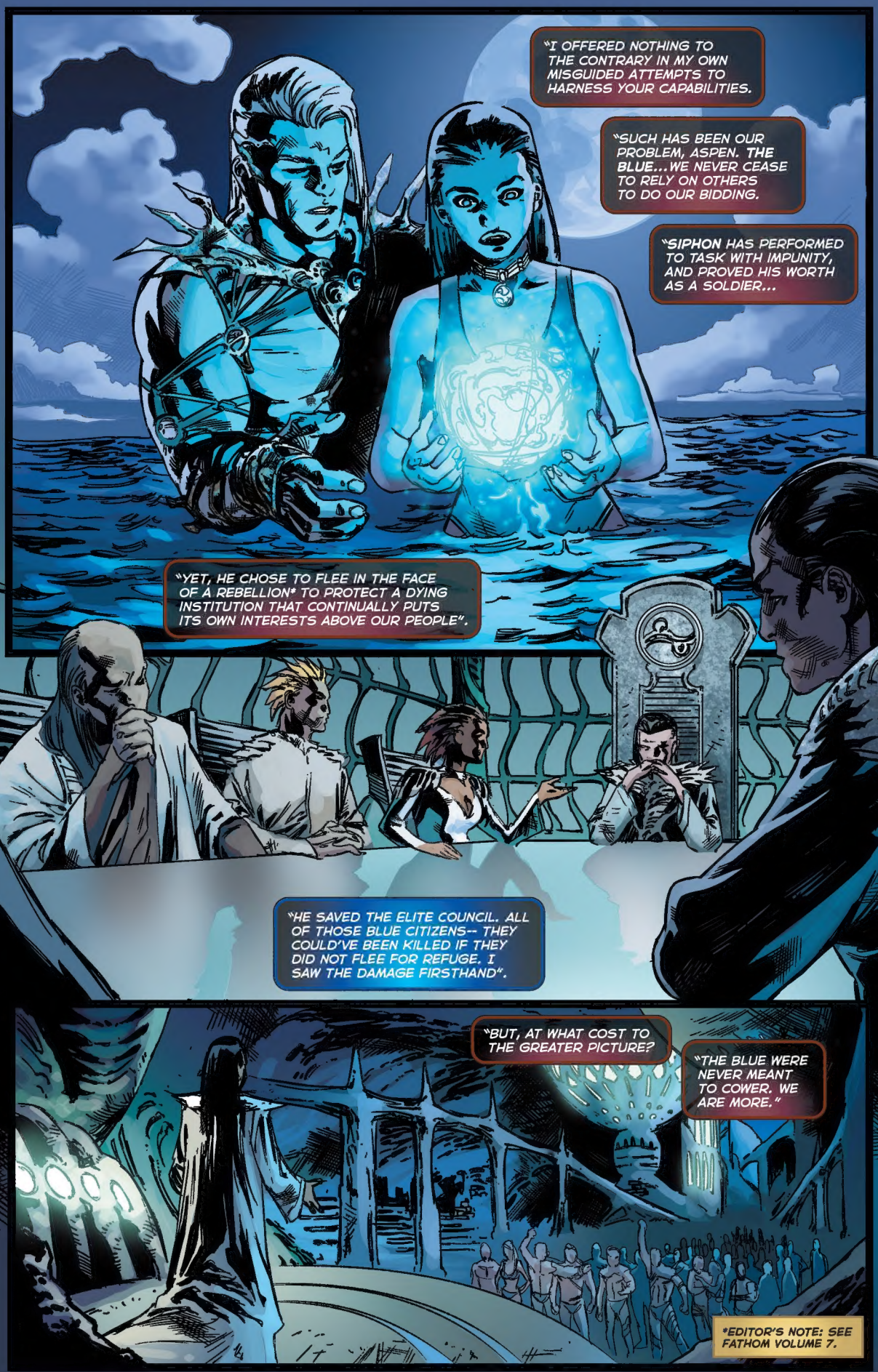
YES, FATHER.

AFTER EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH. THE WAR. THE FALLOUT. THE BLUE AND HUMANS BEGINNING TO WORK TOGETHER ON THEIR OWN...MY PRIORITIES HAVE SHIFTED.

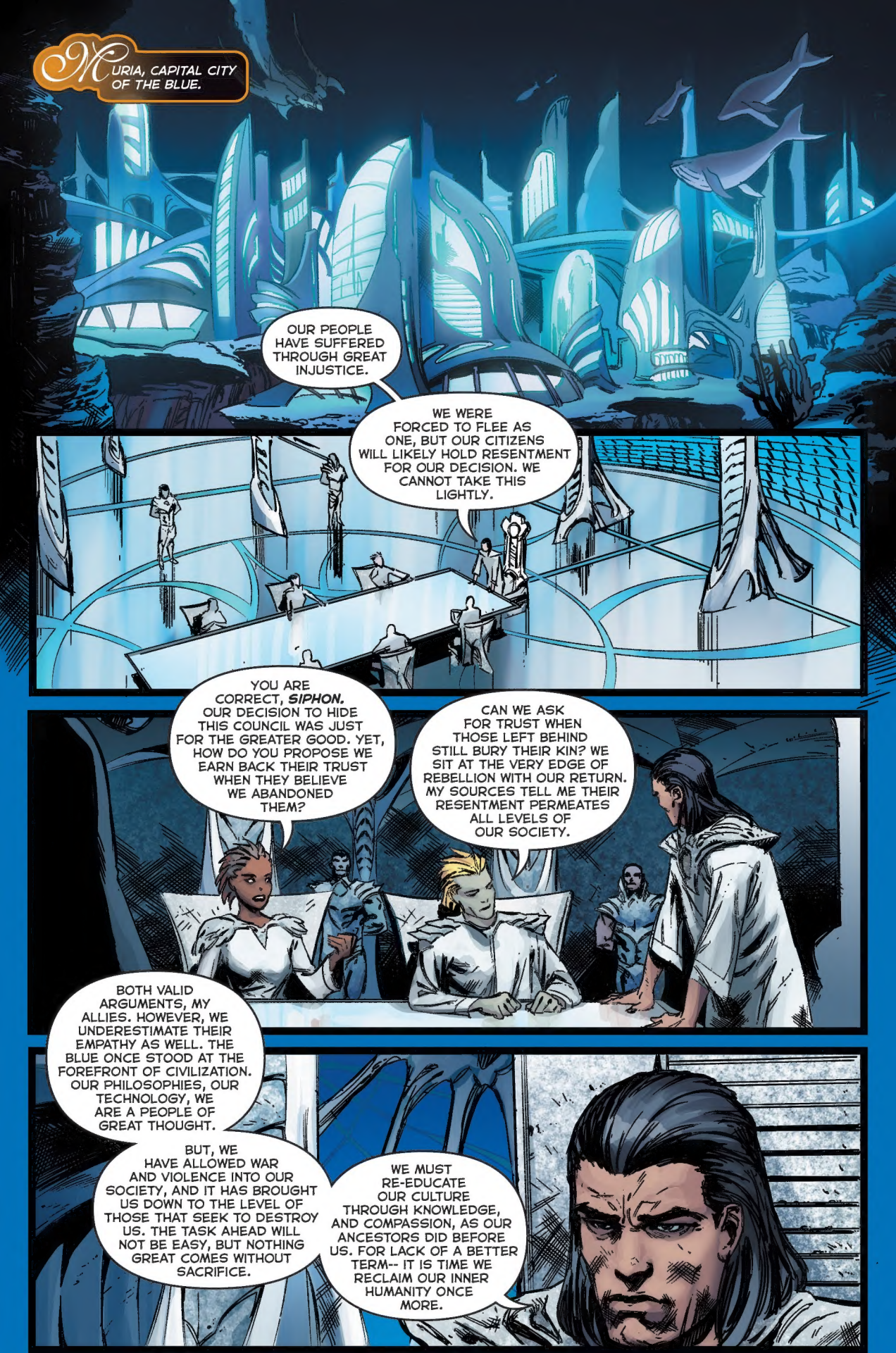
I TOOK MY LIFE BACK.

THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOUR MISTAKE. YOU THINK PROGRESS IS CHANGE. THAT WE ARE ABOVE REPROACH AND EVERYONE ELSE MUST DEAL WITH THE REPERCUSSIONS...

YOU THINK YOU HAVE A CHOICE IN THE SHAPING OF ENTIRE CIVILIZATIONS.


"I OFFERED NOTHING TO THE CONTRARY IN MY OWN MISGUIDED ATTEMPTS TO HARNESS YOUR CAPABILITIES.
"SUCH HAS BEEN OUR PROBLEM, ASPEN. THE BLUE...WE NEVER CEASE TO RELY ON OTHERS TO DO OUR BIDDING.
"SIPHON HAS PERFORMED TO TASK WITH IMPUNITY, AND PROVED HIS WORTH AS A SOLDIER...
"YET, HE CHOSE TO FLEE IN THE FACE OF A REBELLION* TO PROTECT A DYING INSTITUTION THAT CONTINUALLY PUTS ITS OWN INTERESTS ABOVE OUR PEOPLE".
"HE SAVED THE ELITE COUNCIL. ALL OF THOSE BLUE CITIZENS-- THEY COULD'VE BEEN KILLED IF THEY DID NOT FLEE FOR REFUGE. I SAW THE DAMAGE FIRSTHAND".
"BUT, AT WHAT COST TO THE GREATER PICTURE?
"THE BLUE WERE NEVER MEANT TO COWER. WE ARE MORE."
*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE FATHOM VOLUME 7.

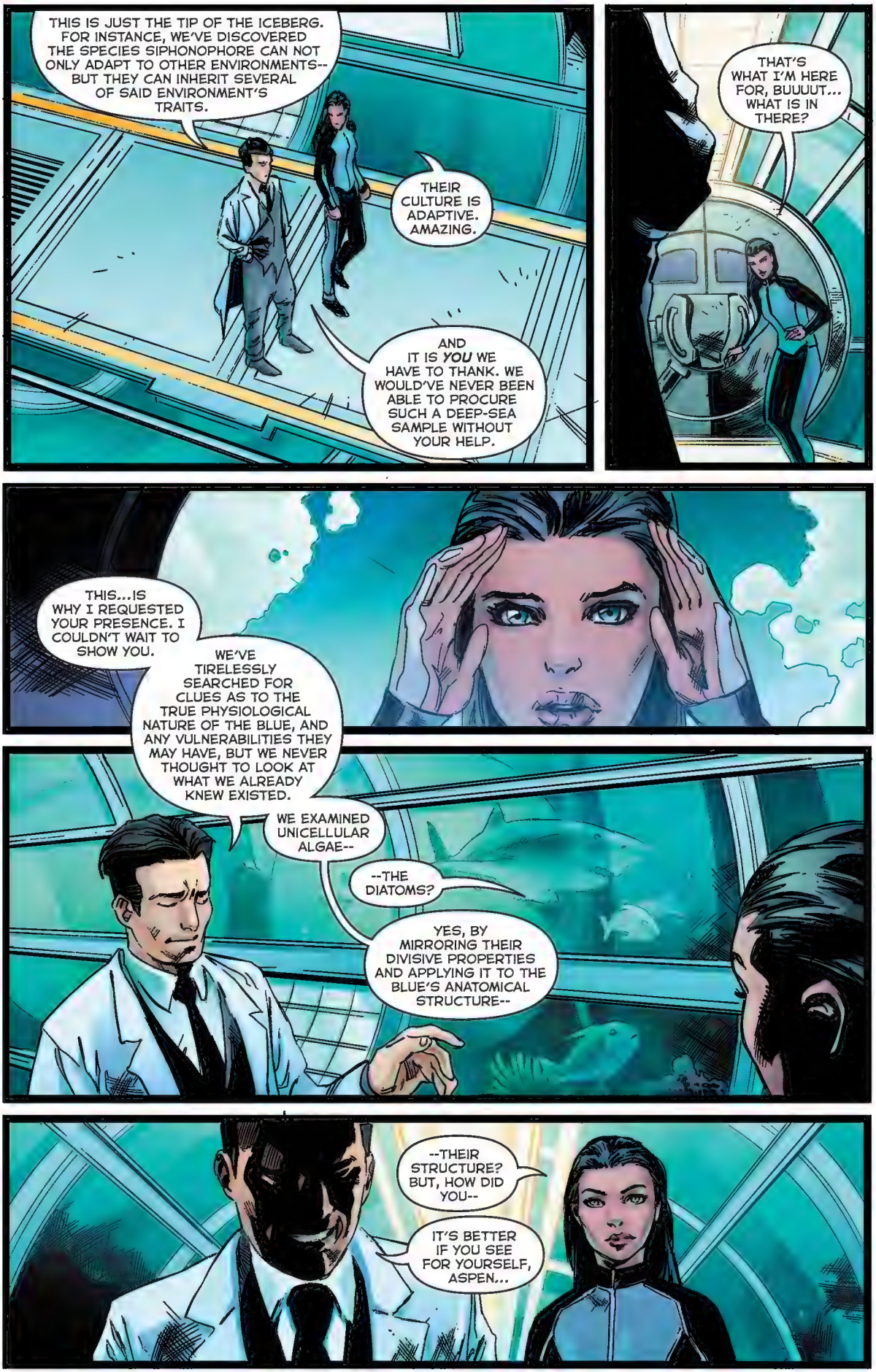
THIS IS MY ONE APPEAL TO YOU, ASPEN. YOU AND I-- WE HAVE SHARED QUITE THE JOURNEY. YET, HUMANS ARE INHERENTLY WEAKER THAN US.
YOU AND I-- TOGETHER-- COULD BRING THE BLUE TO OUR RIGHTFUL DESTINY.
YOUR WAY MEANS DEATH.
ALL WAYS LEAD TO DEATH. IT IS WHAT IS NECESSARY TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE. HAVE YOU NOT FIGURED THAT OUT BY NOW?
I WILL NOT BE A PART OF YOUR DISSIDENCE, KILLIAN. NEVER AGAIN. YOU KNOW I COULD END THIS RIGHT NOW BEFORE WHATEVER YOU HAVE PLANNED TAKES SHAPE?
THAT WAS CONSIDERED LONG BEFORE I SENT WORD TO YOU, ASPEN.
YET, I ALSO TOOK...OTHER PRECAUTIONS. CAN YOU SAY THE SAME?
YOUR LOVER, CHANCE. YOUR ALLY THE JOURNALIST. THE... FATHER YOU HOLD SO DEAR? DO YOU KNOW OF THEIR WHEREABOUTS? BECAUSE MY PEOPLE DO.
YOU SHOULD CHOOSE YOUR NEXT WORDS CAREFULLY...
YOU WILL DO NOTHING. NOT BECAUSE YOU KNOW I WOULD INDEED TAKE SUCH DRASTIC STEPS TO PROTECT OUR CAUSE...
BUT, BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT LIKE US, ASPEN. YOU NEVER WERE.


Muria, capital city of the Blue.
Our people have suffered through great injustice.
We were forced to flee as one, but our citizens will likely hold resentment for our decision. We cannot take this lightly.
You are correct, SIPHON. Our decision to hide this council was just for the greater good. Yet, how do you propose we earn back their trust when they believe we abandoned them?
Can we ask for trust when those left behind still bury their kin? We sit at the very edge of rebellion with our return. My sources tell me their resentment permeates all levels of our society.
Both valid arguments, my allies. However, we underestimate their empathy as well. The Blue once stood at the forefront of civilization. Our philosophies, our technology, we are a people of great thought.
But, we have allowed war and violence into our society, and it has brought us down to the level of those that seek to destroy us. The task ahead will not be easy, but nothing great comes without sacrifice.
We must re-educate our culture through knowledge, and compassion, as our ancestors did before us. For lack of a better term-- it is time we reclaim our inner humanity once more.

I'M SO TIRED OF IT ALL.
KILLIAN MAY THINK HIS CAUSE IS JUST, BUT ALL I'VE EXPERIENCED SINCE LEARNING OF MY TRUE HERITAGE IS THAT NEITHER HUMANS NOR THE BLUE ARE CAPABLE OF PEACE.
SO, I'VE DECIDED TO FOCUS MY EFFORTS ELSEWHERE.
THE OCEAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY ONE CONSTANT.
MARINE BIOLOGY WAS MY FIRST LOVE, AND I ABANDONED IT WHILE TRYING TO FIND MYSELF.
LITTLE DID I KNOW...

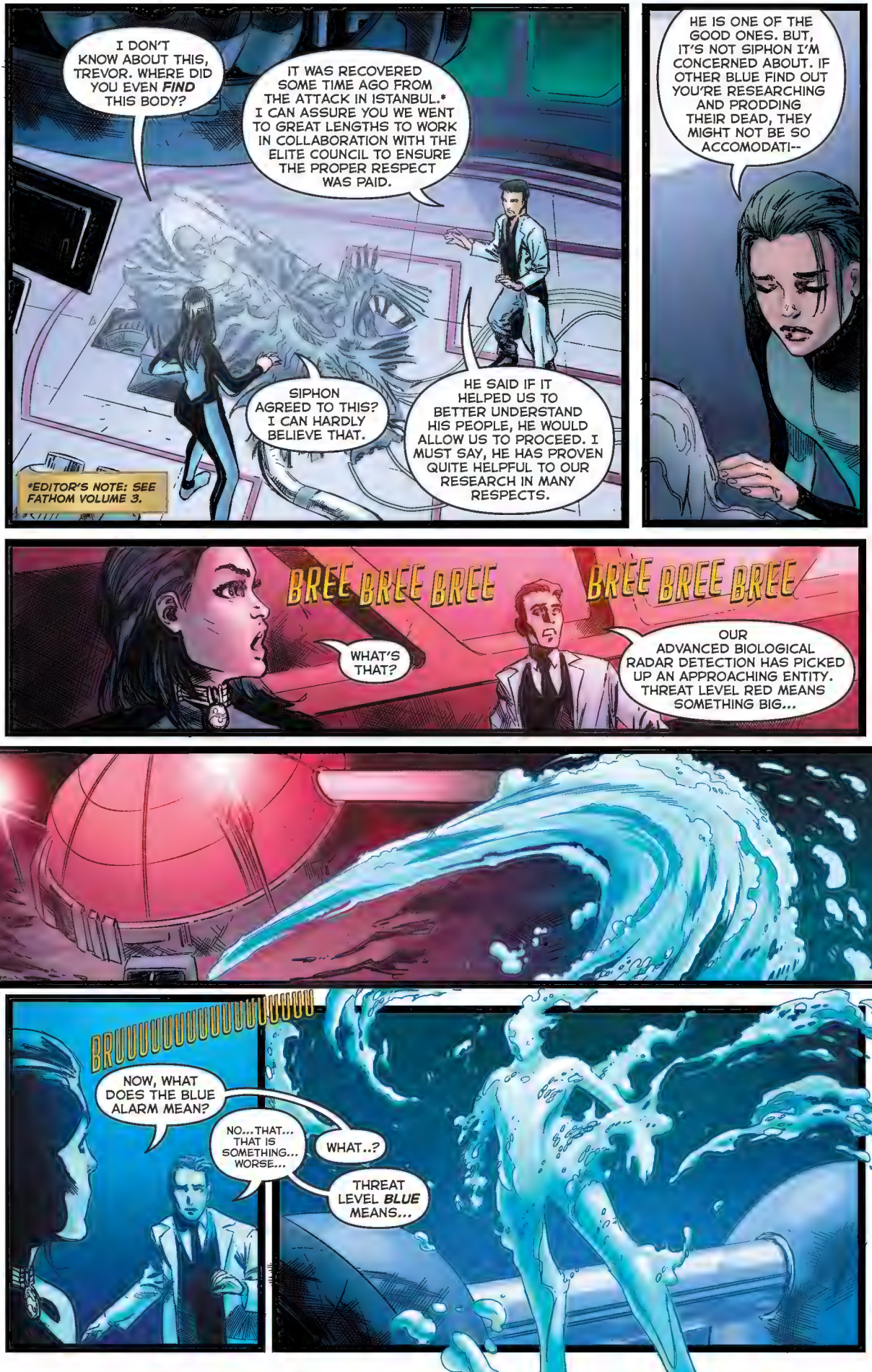
IT NEVER ABANDONED ME ALL THIS TIME.
THE DEEP MARINE DISCOVERY II.
ASPEN-- WE'RE SO PLEASED TO HAVE YOU BACK.

WE'VE HAD SEVERAL NEW DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE INAUGURATION.
I CAN SEE THAT, TREVOR. THE PLACE IS PRACTICALLY BUZZING.
WITH YOUR HELP WE'VE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN OUR RESEARCH. PARTICULARLY IN THE DEPTHS WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO REACH WITH THE BLUE'S AMAZING VEHICLE CAPABILITIES.
IF YOU LOOK DOWN, YOU'LL NOTICE ONE OF OUR MANY NEW DISCOVERIES.
NO. WAY. IS THAT A--
YOU BETCHA, THE MARINE REPTILE COMMONLY KNOWN AS STYXOSAURUS. LONG THOUGHT EXTINCT SINCE THE JURASSIC ERA, BUT NO-- IT WAS JUST HIDING DEEPER THAN WE THOUGHT TO LOOK.
I SEE THE BODY... BUT, WHERE IS HER--
OH, WELL HELLO THERE!
SHE'S... PLAYFUL.
ANOTHER MISCONCEPTION WE'VE REMEDIED. THEY ARE CARNIVORES BUT SIMILAR TO DOLPHINS, THEY DO NOT FEEL THE NEED TO HARM US HUMANS.
SO, LIKE MOST MARINE LIFE. MISUNDERSTOOD BY HUMANITY.
I KNOW THE FEELING.


THIS IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. FOR INSTANCE, WE'VE DISCOVERED THE SPECIES SIPHONOPHORE CAN NOT ONLY ADAPT TO OTHER ENVIRONMENTS-- BUT THEY CAN INHERIT SEVERAL OF SAID ENVIRONMENT'S TRAITS.
THEIR CULTURE IS ADAPTIVE. AMAZING.
AND IT IS *YOU* WE HAVE TO THANK. WE WOULD'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO PROCURE SUCH A DEEP-SEA SAMPLE WITHOUT YOUR HELP.
THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR, BUUUUT... WHAT IS IN THERE?
THIS...IS WHY I REQUESTED YOUR PRESENCE. I COULDN'T WAIT TO SHOW YOU.
WE'VE TIRELESSLY SEARCHED FOR CLUES AS TO THE TRUE PHYSIOLOGICAL NATURE OF THE BLUE, AND ANY VULNERABILITIES THEY MAY HAVE, BUT WE NEVER THOUGHT TO LOOK AT WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW EXISTED.
WE EXAMINED UNICELLULAR ALGAE--
--THE DIATOMS?
YES, BY MIRRORING THEIR DIVISIVE PROPERTIES AND APPLYING IT TO THE BLUE'S ANATOMICAL STRUCTURE--
--THEIR STRUCTURE? BUT, HOW DID YOU--
IT'S BETTER IF YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF, ASPEN...

WE HAVE DISCOVERED WHAT TRULY MAKES THEM TICK...AND ALSO STOP TICKING.

ELSEWHERE.
THEY WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND YOUR TRUE MAKEUP.
I HAVE ASKED MYSELF MANY TIMES WHY I LET YOU GO WHEN WE BOTH WERE TRAPPED WITHIN THESE CONFINES...
THIS TIME, HOWEVER, MY PATIENCE HAS FINALLY PAID OFF.
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HIDE, MY DAUGHTER. THE WATER ITSELF HAS SPOKEN TO ME IN THE WAYS OF THE ANCIENT ONES. IT SPOKE TO ME OF YOUR WHEREABOUTS. I KNOW WHY YOU DWELL IN THE VERY PLACE YOU WERE... ACCELERATED*. BUT, YOU WILL NEVER HIDE AGAIN.
*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE FATHOM VOLUME 4.
NO ONE WILL EVER HURT YOU FROM THIS POINT FORWARD...
SWOOOOOO
ANIKA.
COME, LET US FINALLY SET YOU FREE ONCE AND FOR ALL.


I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS, TREVOR. WHERE DID YOU EVEN *FIND* THIS BODY?
IT WAS RECOVERED SOME TIME AGO FROM THE ATTACK IN ISTANBUL.* I CAN ASSURE YOU WE WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO WORK IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ELITE COUNCIL TO ENSURE THE PROPER RESPECT WAS PAID.
SIPHON AGREED TO THIS? I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THAT.
HE SAID IF IT HELPED US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HIS PEOPLE, HE WOULD ALLOW US TO PROCEED. I MUST SAY, HE HAS PROVEN QUITE HELPFUL TO OUR RESEARCH IN MANY RESPECTS.
*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE FATHOM VOLUME 3.
HE IS ONE OF THE GOOD ONES. BUT, IT'S NOT SIPHON I'M CONCERNED ABOUT. IF OTHER BLUE FIND OUT YOU'RE RESEARCHING AND PRODDING THEIR DEAD, THEY MIGHT NOT BE SO ACCOMODATI--
BREE BREE BREE
BREE BREE BREE
WHAT'S THAT?
OUR ADVANCED BIOLOGICAL RADAR DETECTION HAS PICKED UP AN APPROACHING ENTITY. THREAT LEVEL RED MEANS SOMETHING BIG...
BRUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU
NOW, WHAT DOES THE BLUE ALARM MEAN?
NO...THAT... THAT IS SOMETHING... WORSE...
WHAT..?
THREAT LEVEL *BLUE* MEANS...

IT IS SOMETHING... ELITE.

Muria.
I SUSPECTED YOU WOULD RETURN AT SOME POINT...
BUT, IT SUITS YOU THAT IT WOULD BE ***AFTER*** WE'VE RE-INSTALLED THE ELITE COUNCIL IN PLACE AND BEGUN THE REBUILD PROCESS.
I WOULD SAY THAT IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOUR PRESENCE BACK, ***SIPHON***, IF NOT FOR THE FACT THAT NO ONE SAW OR HEARD WORD OF YOU OR THE COUNCIL WHEN WE NEEDED YOU MOST.
I DID NOT ABANDON ANYTHING, KILLIAN. BY SAVING THE COUNCIL I SAVED OUR PEOPLE. BUT, I WOULD NOT IMAGINE YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MAKING THE TOUGH CALL.
YOU SIMPLY ACT AT WILL AND LEAVE OTHERS TO DEAL WITH THE FALLOUT.
I ACT ACCORDINGLY. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE.
YET, I DID NOT COME HERE TO DWELL ON THE PAST...

"...I CAME TO ENSURE OUR FUTURE."
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE NOW?!
"DEEP DOWN, YOU KNEW THIS DAY WOULD COME. THE COUNCIL AND ITS SOLDIERS HAVE STOOD IDLE FOR LONG ENOUGH.
"I HAVE SERVED AS AN ELITE COMMANDER MYSELF, I KNOW OF THEIR INEPTITUDE.
"OUR ONLY SOLUTION NOW IS CHANGE."
"GODS..."

YOU MONSTER! THOSE ARE ELITE COUNCIL GUARDS. YOU CA--
GRAAAAHHH!
I WAS FOOLISH BEFORE. ASPEN WAS NEVER THE INSTRUMENT I NEEDED. ANIKA, MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD, HAS SHOWN ME THE TRUE PATH TO SALVATION...
SHE WILL RISE TO GREATER DEPTHS.

"MURIA IS FINISHED, SIPHON.

"THE CLEANSE HAS COMMENCED.

"YOU CALL ME A MONSTER BUT WE WILL DO WHAT'S NECESSARY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE BLUE."

Muria.

Former capital city of the Blue.

YOU HAVE CONVICTION. I HAVE ALWAYS VALUED THIS ABOUT YOU.
HOWEVER, I WANT YOU TO SEE FIRSTHAND THE RESULT OF YOUR FAILINGS. IT WAS NOT YOUR PLACE TO ASSUME COMMAND.
YOU ARE NOT A LEADER. YOU ARE A WARRIOR AT HEART, THRUST INTO A SITUATION YOU COULD NEVER CONTROL.
AND FOR THAT I WILL PROVIDE YOU A PROPER WARRIOR'S DEATH.
SCHLUNK!
BE AT PEACE WITH OUR ANCESTORS.
TO BE CONTINUED...

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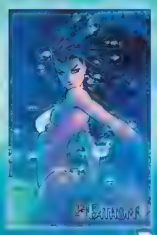

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Sea Depth 30" Exclusive
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by Michael Turner
& Peter Steigerwald

There are two worlds, the one we know, and the one below...

Aspen Matthews rekindled her love of marine biology at the DMD II, but the arrival of Kiani, the powerful Elite Blue warrior, threatens both her livelihood and the safety of the facility and its scientists.

Killian's plan was set in motion. He freed his daughter Anika from her self-confinement and used her rage and powers to destroy Muria, the capitol city of The Blue.

"Elites"

script Vince Hernandez

pencils Mauricio Campetella

Peter Steigerwald
& Natalia Nesterenko

lettering Zen

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Issue 2 of 6

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Hours after the fall of Muria.
"I DO NOT REMEMBER HOW MANY I RESCUED IN
BUT I
"THE WORST PART OF IT...
WAS THAT
WE

"AND THIS FACT CANNOT BE [illegible]

"MY [illegible]

"I COULD NOT [illegible]

THEN.
"MY FATHER WAS PUT TO ETERNAL REST WITH THE WATER
"HE WAS A DEDICATED SOLDIER. A GOOD
"I WITNESSED MY MOTHER BEGIN TO LOSE HOPE IN THE
"SHE WAS
"SHE WAS IMPULSIVE, ACTING ON HER
"THAT WAS WHEN I
"A MAN WHO CAUSED THE DEAT
"IT WOULD BE THE LAS

"IT IS A FUNNY THING. WHEN YOU ARE A SOLDIER IN SERVICE OF THE
"YET, WHEN YOU ARE A DISSIDENT, YOU ARE BARELY REMARKED UPON AT ALL.
"I SPENT A DECADE OF MY YOUTH BLIND TO MY OWN MOTHER'S WHEREABOUTS. A PART OF ME
"HOWEVER, I CAME TO
"AND THE TRAGEDY
"IF IT WERE NOT FOR ASPEN MATTHEWS, I WOULD NEVER HAVE
"HOWEVER... I ALSO LEARNED

I HAVE BLUNTLY DELIVERED THESE WORDS BEFORE YOU, MY ESTEEMED ELITE COUNCIL, NOT IN THE HOPES OF SYMPATHY...BUT RATHER--UNDERSTANDING.
I AM NOT SIMPLY THE NEXT IN LINE AS ELITE COMMANDER, TASKED WITH ENFORCING THE PHILOSOPHY OF OUR GOVERNMENT.
I HAVE EMBODIED IT MY ENTIRE LIFE.
OUR LEADER, SIPHON, HAS BEEN LAID TO REST AND THE PEOPLE'S FATE RESTS IN OUR HANDS.
REST ASSURED, MY COUNCIL...
KILLIAN AND ANIKA WILL BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

"THE BLUE ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH FRONT DOORS, IT SEEMS."
"WOULD YOU HAVE GIVEN ME A WARM WELCOME IF I KNOCKED FIRST?"
"I'M NOT A FOOL. I KNOW THAT FACILITY IS ARMED TO THE TEETH FOR THREATS SUCH AS MYSELF. I THOUGHT IT BEST TO APPROACH PREPARED.
"AND I KNEW YOU WOULD THINK BEFORE ACTING.
"YOU'RE NOT LIKE THE REST OF THEM, ASPEN. NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES WE HAVE NOT SEEN EYE TO EYE".
"THANK YOU. I THINK."
"BUT, FURTHERMORE-- I NEEDED TO SPEAK WITH YOU...ALONE."

THE VERY FATE OF THE BLUE IS AT STAKE.
KIANI, I CAN'T BEGIN TO TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES I'VE HEARD THAT EXPRESSION.
AND HOW MANY TIMES PEOPLE LOOK AT ME LIKE I'M JUST A TOOL TO BE USED HOWEVER THEY PLEASE.
WE HAVE FOUGHT IN CONFLICT BEFORE. AND, ON THE SAME SIDE. DO YOU THINK I WOULD HAVE CALLED UPON YOU IF IT WERE NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY?
THAT'S WHAT TROUBLES ME.
ASPEN...DO YOU KNOW WHY THE BLUE TRY SO HARD TO LIVE COLLECTIVELY AS ONE PEOPLE? WHY WE ARE USHERED BACK INTO THE VERY WATER ITSELF WHEN WE DIE?
WHY IS THA--

BECAUSE THE WATER SPEAKS TO US.
ALL OF US. ***THE BLUE.*** WE SHARE A BOND WITH THE WATER THAT IS ABOVE MERELY EXISTING WITHIN IT. IT COMMUNICATES WITH US THROUGH EVERY FIBER OF OUR BEING.
WE ARE ALL BORN WITH A LINK THAT MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ESCAPE OUR COLLECTIVE THOUGHTS. WE ARE ONE AND THE WATER IS OUR VESSEL FOR THIS.
MY FAMILY... MY FATHER. OUR BLOOD.
AND IT TELLS ME...
MY FAMILY HAS DONE SOMETHING TERRIBLE.

MURIA? NO. NOT LIKE THIS. KILLIAN CAME TO ME.
HE THREATENED AND WARNED ME OF THIS IN HIS OWN WAY. I COULD HAVE--
--IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT. SADLY... THIS WAS A LONG TIME COMING OUTSIDE OF ANYONE'S CONTROL. NOT ALL SERIES OF EVENTS BELONG TO OUR GUILT. THIS IS ABOUT CIVILIZATIONS.
BUT, ONLY *WE* CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
ASPEN...MY SISTER, *ANIKA,* SHE IS BUT A CHILD, TRAPPED IN A BODY FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN SHE COULD EVER IMAGINE.
IF WE DON'T *KILL* BOTH HER AND MY FATHER, ONE THING IS FOR CERTAIN-- THERE WILL BE *NO* HUMANITY LEFT FOR YOU TO RETURN TO. EVER.

"THIS TOWER ONCE STOOD PROUDLY AS A DEFENSIVE OUTPOST FOR OUR ANCESTORS.
"THIS STRUCTURE HAS SAVED COUNTLESS LIVES, AND CONTINUES TO PROVIDE FOR US TO THIS DAY."
I DON'T LIKE HISTORY, AND WE DO NOT NEED TO HIDE.
YOU SAW WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF. I'VE LIVED ABOVE THE SURFACE FOR A TIME AS WELL.
AND I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN YOU TREAT ME LIKE A CHILD. I HAVE BEEN PLACES. SEEN THINGS, YOU KNOW.
I LOOK AT YOU AS ANYTHING BUT, MY DAUGHTER.
HOWEVER, POWER LEFT TO CHANCE IS MERELY FAILURE IN WAITING.
WE DO NOT HIDE BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID. WE HIDE BECAUSE IT IS BEST TO STRIKE YOUR OPPONENT FROM A POSITION OF STEALTH.
FOR THEY WILL NEVER SEE IT COMING.

SO, IT HAS BEGUN.
IT HAS BEEN QUITE SOME TIME, CASQUE.
YET, I WILL NOT WASTE YOUR TIME WITH MEMORIES.
YOU HAVE SET IN MOTION THAT WHICH YOU SO DESPERATELY SOUGHT. IT IS AN INEVITABILITY WE SPEAK, KILLIAN.
IT IS OUT OF RESPECT THE BLACK DID NOT INTERCEDE IN THE FALL OF MURIA.
WE RISE WHEN THE FATE OF OUR CIVILIZATION HANGS IN THE BALANCE. YOUR PEOPLE'S BLOODSHED CHANGES NOTHING FOR OUR STANDING.
YOU ALREADY KNOW THIS.
YES, AND I SEEK TO CHANGE IT.
THAT IS WHY WE ARE HERE.

YOU THINK YOU ARE WISE, BUT WE ARE ALWAYS AHEAD OF YOU IN MATTERS OF FORETHOUGHT.
YOU FORGET THAT I TRAINED HER SISTER, KIANI.
OR PERHAPS YOU DON'T, AND BELIEVE MY KNOWLEDGE OF THIS ONE'S LIFE, AND HER BONDS, WILL SWAY ME.
I HAVE COME BECAUSE THIS ONE IS BEYOND YOU, AND YOUR PEOPLE.
THE TRUTH IS, NEITHER PATH INTERESTS ME.
YOU SEEK FOR HER TO BE YOUR CATALYST, TO WHAT END? IT DOES NOT CONCERN US. THE BLUE ARE BUT INCIDENTAL IN THE FACE OF TRUE POWER.
WE WILL MAKE HER MORE, AND SHE WILL SEE THE TRUE DIVINITY OF THE WATER.
TAKE MY HAND, YOUNG ONE...
...AND JOIN US, AMONG GODS.

IN THE PAST, I WOULD'VE BLAMED MYSELF FOR THE MANY LIVES KILLIAN HAS JUST TAKEN.
BUT, I'M NOT A KILLER. ONE LIFE FOR THOUSANDS. IT'S NOT UP TO ME.
I KNOW KIANI WOULD DISAGREE.
AND, THIS FEELS DIFFERENT.
THIS IS NOT ABOUT THE BLUE. THIS IS ABOUT MY PEOPLE.
AND WHAT WOULD BECOME OF THEM IF HE WERE TO SUCCEED.
IT'S NOT HARD TO IMAGINE.

HE'S ALREADY MADE IT HAPPEN.
THE CITY ITSELF SEEMS TO HAVE DIED. THIS IS TERRIBLE. WHERE IS EVERYONE?
THE CAPITOL HAS BEEN EVACUATED. MANY HAVE FLED AND MANY HAVE PERISHED, I SUPPOSE.
OR WE HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO PROTECT...

...OR TO LOSE.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
IT IS THE GATEWAY TO THE BLACK.
OUR DOMICILE IS PROTECTED. NO ONE ENTERS WITHOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE.
I GROW TIRED OF EVERYONE FORCING ME EVERYWHERE AND YET TELLING ME NOTHING.
YOU MUST TRUST US, ANIKA.
AND... IF I SAY NO..?
YOU HAVE ALREADY CHOSEN. IT IS TOO LATE.

UNGH!
YOU THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES THAT DON'T NEED WATER--
--TO KILL?!?
YOUR RAGE IS YOUR UNDOING.

YOU CAN WIELD IT, BUT YOU LACK UNDERSTANDING OF IT.
YOU WILL LEARN WHAT DRIVES YOUR RAGE.
WHAT FUELS THE HATRED YOU HOLD SO DEAR...
YOU WILL KNOW WHY SO MANY ATTEMPT TO CONTROL YOU AGAINST YOUR WILL. I WILL SHOW YOU..

WHAT YOU ARE TRULY CAPABLE OF.
TO BE CONTINUED..

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VOL. 8

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S

FATHOM

#3

OF 6

VINCE HERNANDEZ

MAURICIO CAMPETELLA

PETER STEIGERWALD

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by Michael Turner
& Joe Weems V
& Peter Steigerwald

C

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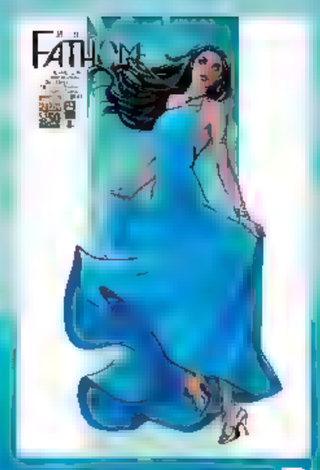
by Siya Oum



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San Diego 2019 Exclusive
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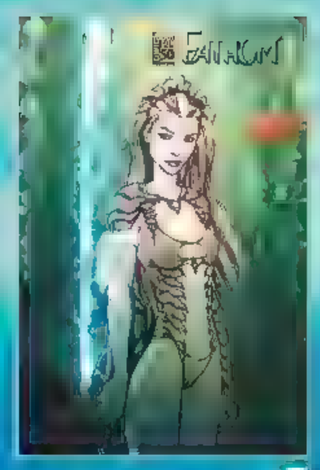

E

Comic-Con International
San Diego 2019 Exclusive
Limited Edition of 50
by Michael Turner
& Mark Roslan
& Peter Steigerwald

There are two worlds, the one we know, and the one below...

Wind, a new Elite Commander, emerged from the devastation of Muria following the attack by Anika that was led by Killian. Meanwhile, Aspen and Kiani journeyed to the destroyed city to see the damage firsthand. And, deeper in the depths of the ocean, Anika discovered that there are powers greater than those of the Elite Blue—those that belong to The Black.

"Family Spies"

script Vince Hernandez

pencils Mauricio Campetella

lors Peter Steigerwald
& Natalia Nesterenko

lettering Zen

Fathom Volume Eight
Issue 3 of 6

Fathom created by: Michael Turner | The Black co-created by: Michael Turner & Peter Steigerwald

Editors: Gabe Carrasco, Frank Mastromauro Design and Production: Mark Roslan Lettering fonts designed by: Robin Spehar, Comicraft, Blambot

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THEN.

IT NEVER GETS OLD.

THE BEAUTY OF IT ALL...IT OVERWHELMS.

THE ENDLESS EXPANSE OF THE OCEAN?

THE WORLD ABOVE. EVERY TIME I RISE IT OFFERS SOMETHING NEW.

THE AIR.

THE SOUNDS...

THE TOUCH OF THE ***WIND*** ON MY SKIN...

I SUPPOSE WE'RE SPOILED IN THAT REGARD, ***KYLA.*** AND, GO FIGURE-- WE LOOK AT YOUR WORLD AND MARVEL.

TARAS WILL CALL FOR US ANY MOMENT. ***KILLIAN*** IS ON A TIME CLOCK AND HE WOULD NEVER UPSET HIS MASTER.

ASPEN, THERE IS ONE THING YOU MUST LEARN FAST ABOUT OUR TWO WORLDS.

LIES AND MISTRUST. DANGER. IT IS NOT DIFFERENTIATED BY THE SHORELINE...

Now.

ASPEN MATTHEWS...

--ER.

I REMEMBER.

I KNOW YOU AS WELL, ***WIND.*** YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER, BUT WE HAVE MET BEFO--

I KNOW MUCH ABOUT YOU, ASPEN. I HAVE MADE IT MY LIFE'S WORK.

AND YOU AS WELL, ***KIANI.*** BECAUSE YOU ***ARE*** MY WORK.

THAT IS THE WORK OF THE ELITE COUNCIL'S DECISION-MAKING.

IDLE PETTINESS.

YOU HAVE SEEN FOR YOURSELF, THERE IS NO TIME FOR LOYALTIES AND PAST INDISCRETIONS.

THAT IS EASY TO SAY WHEN YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE FALLOUT.

WIND, A LOT HAS CHANGED SINCE THOSE DAYS. I CAN ATTEST THAT KIANI HAS MORE THAN PAID FOR HER PAST. WE ALL HAVE.

RIGHT NOW WE NEED TO FOCUS ON KILLIAN AND ANIKA. TRUST ME, WE CAN HELP.

KILLIAN HAS ***NEVER*** LEFT MY SIGHT. AND ***YOU*** HAVE EARNED MY TRUST AND THEN SOME, ASPEN.

MY SOURCES TELL ME HE HAS TAKEN REFUGE IN ***TAURO,*** A VILLAGE THAT LIES IN THE ANCIENT DISTRICT OF THE CAPITOL'S TERRITORY NOT FAR FROM HERE. HE DOESN'T EVEN PRETEND TO HIDE FROM THE COUNCIL.

AND, PERTAINING TO ***ANIKA'S*** WHEREABOUTS... ...LET US JUST SAY...IF YOU TRULY WANT TO HELP, THAT IS WHERE IT IS NEEDED MOST.

TAURO.

YOU LOOK DOWN UPON US NO DIFFERENTLY THAN THE REST.

DO NOT PLAY US FOR A FOOL, ***KILLIAN.***

ANYWHERE YOU GO, TRAGEDY BEFALLS, AND SOMEONE IS LEFT TO PICK UP THE PIECES.

SUCH IS PRECISELY WHY I CAME TO YOU FIRST, ***MERELIA.*** YOUR FORESIGHT.

TAURO IS DOOMED NOT BECAUSE OF RECENT EVENTS IN MURIA, BUT BECAUSE OF ITS GEOGRAPHY. IT EXISTS IN THE SHADOW OF GREATER POWERS.

YOUR LINEAGE IS DYING OFF. YOUR TIME HERE IN THIS RELIC OF A VILLAGE HAS ENDED AND YOU ALREADY KNOW IT.

I HAVE COME WITH THE ONLY SOLUTION YOU WILL EVER RECEIVE.

TO DIE WITH HONOR IS THE TAURO WAY. IT IS NOT UPON MY SHOULDERS TO CHANGE THE WAY OF THE ANCIENT ONES.

WHO SAID ANYTHING OF DEATH? I SPEAK OF SOMETHING MORE. TAURO CAN PRESERVE THE WAYS OF THE ANCIENTS...

...WHILE YOU CAN ACCEPT PRAISE FOR USHERING ITS PEOPLE FORWARD.

YOU MISTAKE MY INTENT COMPLETELY. I HAVE NOT COME FOR AID, OR SHELTER. MURIA SURELY HAS THE RESOURCES TO TRACK MY WHEREABOUTS. I HAVE COME TO OFFER THAT WHICH YOU HAVE DEEPLY YEARNED FOR...

...I CAN GIVE YOU THE SURFACE WORLD.

AM I INTERRUPTING?

IT'S A LOT TO TAKE IN. WHEN I WAS YOUNGER IT SEEMED...MUCH BIGGER. THE BLADES FELT... HEAVIER.

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, WE HAD TO HOLD HANDS TO CROSS THE STREET.

ASPEN...MAY I ASK YOU SOMETHING THAT HAS ALWAYS TROUBLED ME? EVEN WITH AS MUCH TIME AS I HAVE SPENT ABOVE THE SURFACE?

SOUNDS SERIOUS. GO ON.

IS...

IS IT TRUE THAT HUMAN CHILDREN SLICE OPEN WHAT YOU KNOW AS "FROGS" IN THEIR CLASSROOMS? AND IF SO, THE FROGS, THEY ARE DEAD FIRST...I HOPE?

YES, KIANI. YOU MIGHT SAY THEY'VE ALREADY ***CROAKED...***

OKAY. I ALREADY HATE MYSELF FOR THAT ONE.

CAN I ASK *YOU* SOMETHING NOW..?

ARE YOU PREPARED TO GO THAT DEEP AND CONFRONT YOUR FAMILY IN WHAT COULD TURN BLOODY?

I COULD ASK THE SAME ABOUT YOU FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD. THE BLACK KNOWN AS ***RAHGER?**** YOUR TRUE FATHER. WHAT HAPPENED DOWN THERE TO YOU. THE WATER SPEAKS, DON'T FORGET.

YET, NONE OF IT MATTERS. NOT ANYMORE. LIKE THIS WALL, IT IS ALL HISTORY.

EACH OF THESE HILTS TELLS A STORY OF BLOODSHED AND TRAGEDY. BUT, IT CONTINUES TO PERFORM TO TASK NO MATTER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE FATHOM VOLUME TWO!

IT'S FUNNY. I CAN CREATE A SWORD FROM THE MOISTURE IN THE AIR BUT I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY USED A REAL ONE.

BEFORE ANY OF THIS I WAS NOT MUCH OF A FIGHTER.

FOR OUR OWN SAKES, DO YOU TRUST THAT WIND IS YOUR OPPOSITE? THAT SHE WILL DO WHAT IS NECESSARY?

PERHAPS. REALLY, THOUGH, IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT SHE CAN DO SO MUCH AS WHO SHE IS. SHE'S AS LOYAL TO THE CITIZENRY AS IT GETS, AND THEY TO HER. THE OPTICS ARE IMPORTANT THIS TIME.

ALSO...

"SHE SEEMED PRETTY DETERMINED TO BRING KILLIAN TO JUSTICE."

THE NEXT DAY.

AH, SO IT BEGINS. YOUR TRAIL OF DEATH HAS REACHED OUR BORDERS.

MY MEN TELL ME IT IS ***HER***-- THE NEW ELITE COMMANDER. SHE BREACHED OUR CENTRAL HALL IN THE WAKING HOURS.

MURDERING OUR DEFENSES IN THE PROCESS. BY HERSELF. IS THIS THE JUSTICE OF THE ELITE COUNCIL NOW? WE HAVE HER SURROUNDED IN THIS BUILDING.

I KNOW LITTLE OF HER EXPERIENCE BUT HAVE HEARD WHISPERS OF HER IMPETUOUS NATURE. SO IT APPEARS THIS ONE PLAYS FOR KEEPS.

HER ROLE MATTERS LITTLE IN THE BLUE'S GREATER PURPOSE.

SHE CAN GO.

BRING HER BACK ALIVE FOR QUESTIONING IF POSSIBLE, ***BORDIN.*** OR NOT. I CARE LITTLE OF HER FATE. JUST GET IT DONE.

I AM ON IT.

YOU'RE RIGHT. THE WATER JUST... SPOKE TO ME.

AMAZING.

GUIDING US HERE. IT WILL DO THAT IF YOU ALLOW IT.

WE SHOULD WAIT FOR ANIKA TO SIMPLY ACT AGAIN-- THEN MAKE OUR MOVE. HERE, IN THE GATEWAY TO THE BLACK...WE ARE VASTLY AT A DISADVANTAGE.

AND THEY WON'T SEE US COMING.

OR THEY'LL BE EXPECTING US.

COME ON. IT'S ALL COMING BACK TO ME NOW.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CLUE WHAT YOU'LL SAY TO ANIKA? LIKE WHY DOES HER TRAIL LEAD TO HERE? WITH THE BLACK?

LET US WORRY ABOUT SURVIVING THE GREETING BEFORE WE GET THAT FAR.

THE DARKNESS WILL NULL OUR SENSES. I CANNOT SEE TWO STEPS AHEAD OF--

--ASPEN, WHAT IS IT?

ASPEN?!

KIANI... I...UH...I CAN'T...

MY MIND... IT...

NNNNHHH.

ASPEN-- THE ELECTRICAL IMPULSES INSIDE YOUR BRAIN. I WARNED YOU.

IT IS THEM!

DO NOT ALLOW THEM IN! YOU MUST FIGHT IT.

ASPEN!

NNNGH!

ASPEN...

TAURO.

BREEP

PROXIMITY MINES ARE STANDARD ISSUE FOR ALL PROTECTED LOCATIONS INSIDE THE CAPITAL'S JURISDICTION.

NEXT-IN-LINE, I WOULD'VE EXPECTED YOU TO KNOW THIS.

I SEE THE COUNCIL IS STILL WOEFULLY BEHIND ON THE ART OF WAR AND ALWAYS UNDERESTIMATING THE TAURONIANS.

ALLOW ME TO REMIND YOU OF OUR MERIT!

ASPEN...

...THE BRINGER OF DEATH...

DESPAIR.

YOUR RETURN WAS INEVITABLE AS WAS HERS.

FITTING...

...FOR THE VOID HAS BECOME THE FUTURE.

IT IS OKAY. YOU MUST FIGHT THE IMPULSE.

SHOW YOURSELF-- IF YOU ARE SO POWERFUL!

BRUTE!

ERRRAAAAHHHH!

YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE COME, KIAN!

NNNHH... CASQUE..?

YOU HAVE ARRIVED LOOKING FOR A FIGHT. ALL YOU HAVE FOUND...

...IS A NEW FATE.

YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD STORM OUR CENTRAL HALL AS ONE?

SUCH CONCEIT IS THE COUNCIL'S WAY, I SUPPOSE.

THIS IS A LONG TIME COMING.

YOU--

--TALK TOO MUCH!

AHHHHHHHH!

KILLIAN!

WHAT DID YOU DO TO BORDIN?!

YOUR MEN HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH ACCORDINGLY.

MEN... YOU SAY?

YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE YOUR DUE DILIGENCE BEFORE STORMING INTO MY STRONGHOLD.

I WOULD HAVE SHOWED YOU THE WAY OF THE ANCIENTS. I WOULD HAVE SHOWED YOU WHY MY PEOPLE FOLLOW ME.

YOU MAY CALL THEM ELITE ABILITIES... HERE...

I CALL THEM MY BIRTHRIGHT.

YOU WILL NOT KILL ME.

OH?

BECAUSE I *AM* A KILLER. AND I CAN SPOT ANOTHER BY INSTINCT.

I HAVE COME WITH ONE-- AND ONLY ONE-- OFFER.

YOU THINK THIS IS A NEGOTIATION?! I WILL--

--WAIT.

LET HER SPEAK.

KILLIAN?!

DISSIDENT... I HAVE COME FOR ONE PURPOSE ALONE.

ONE BORN OF BLOODSHED AND TRAGEDY, AND SEARED INTO VENGEANCE.

ALL OF IT LEADING TO THIS...

SHLUNK!

...I OFFER MYSELF TO YOUR CAUSE.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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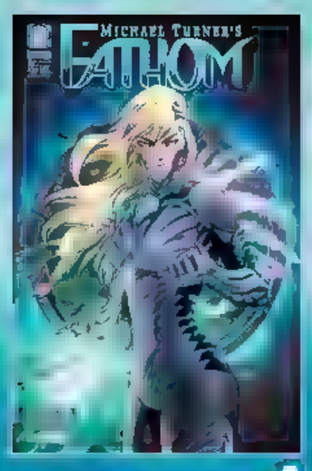
MICHAEL TURNER
JOE WEEMS



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04 PETER STEIGERWALD

B

Direct edition

01 MICHAEL TURNER

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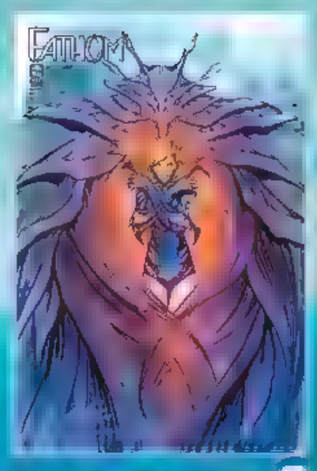
05 PETER STEIGERWALD



C

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01 SIYA OUM

THERE ARE TWO WORLDS, THE ONE WE KNOW, AND THE ONE BELOW...

In the devastated city of Muria, Elite Commander Wind quickly greets Aspen with open arms, while remaining suspicious of Kiani. Meanwhile, in the underwater city of Tauro, Killian plots to recruit Bordon and Merelia to his New Dissidents. Far below the waves, Aspen and Kiani journey to the lair of The Black, where Casque immediately attacks them, leaving Aspen unconscious, reliving her greatest fears and failures. Unfaltering in her quest for vengeance, Wind crashes the meeting in Tauro, and — much to everyone's bewilderment — pledges her allegiance to Killian.

"A PERFECT LIFE"

script VINCE HERNANDEZ

pencils MAURICIO CAMPETELLA
& ANDRÉ RISSO
pgs 11-12

colors NATALIA NESTERENKO
& PETER STEIGERWALD

lettering ZEN

FATHOM VOLUME EIGHT
ISSUE 4 OF 6

Fathom created by: Michael Turner | The Black co-created by: Michael Turner & Peter Steigerwald

Editors: GABE CARRASCO, FRANK MASTROMAURO Design and Production: MARK ROSLAN Lettering fonts designed by: ROBIN SPEHAR, COMICRAFT, BLAMBOT

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THEN.

WHY DID YOU BRING HER HERE--?

TO KEEP THEM AT BAY. YOU HAVE TO TRUST ME.

I DO. YOU'RE THE ***ONLY*** ONE I TRUST.

LET'S PREPARE THE SHIP.

WAIT-- ***CASQUE***-- DO YOU THINK IT'S WISE TO OFFER HER SUCH CLUES TO HER PAST?

IF WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT ***THE BLACK*** IS TRUE...

KIANI... YOU ARE WISE BEYOND YOUR YEARS WITH THE HEART OF A THOUSAND WARRIORS...

HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL THE MATTER OF ***SUBVERSION*** FOR YOU TO LEARN.

THE BLACK ARE POWERFUL BEYOND OUR CONTROL. BY APPEASING THEM, WE OPEN THE POSSIBILITY FOR SOMETHING THAT HAS NEVER OCCURRED BETWEEN ALL OF US UNDER THE SURFACE. A DIALOGUE.

AND POTENTIALLY GET ONE OF OUR OWN KILLED IN THE PROCESS.

YOU ALSO NEED A REFRESHER COURSE ON SACRIFICE, YOUNG ONE.

COME. THE TIME DRAWS NEAR.

IT IS NO SECRET...THAT THE HISTORY BETWEEN CASQUE AND I-- TO THIS VERY DAY-- REMAINS...

Yow.

...COMPLICATED.

AS MY MENTOR, CASQUE TAUGHT ME MANY THINGS ABOUT MYSELF.

BUT, I LEARNED ABOUT SACRIFICE ON MY OWN.

CASQUE...

WHO TAUGHT YOU TO STRIKE WHEN SOMEONE'S BACK IS TURNED?

KIANI—I—

SAVE IT. YOU MAY HAVE TAUGHT ME MANY THINGS, BUT YOU SEE...

...I LEARNED A GREAT DEAL ON MY OWN ABOUT WHO I AM...AND WHAT I CAN DO.

I HAVE DIED AND COME BACK...

...I HAVE SUFFERED TRUE SACRIFICE.

PRSH

YOU HAVE... NNGH... LEARNED.

ONLY THAT EVEN THE MOST POWERFUL OF FOE CAN BE BLINDSIDED BY SPEED.

IS THAT WHAT YOU SEE ME AS? A FOE?

IS IT NOT *YOU* THAT JUST ATTACKED *US?!*

ONCE MORE YOU FAIL TO REALIZE WHAT I HAVE DONE FOR YOU.

I HAVE *SAVED* YOU BOTH.

YOU CANNOT TRUST COUNCIL TRASH AT THEIR WORD!

MERELIA. ALLOW YOURSELF A BREATH.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ORDER ME AROUND IN MY OWN PROVINCE!

HER PLOY IS SO TRANSPARENT AS IF TO BE LAUGHABLE.

PERHAPS, THEN, ITS OWN ABSURDITY IS ITS VALIDITY.

YOU SPEAK IN RIDDLES!

ENOUGH! I WILL NOT LET A TRAITOR IN OUR MIDST!

IF IT IS A TRAITOR YOU SEEK, I WILL OBLIGE...

BUT, THAT IS NOT WHY I HAVE COME.

WHATEVER YOU THINK YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH IS NOT HOW THIS WILL PLAY OUT, GIRL.

ARE YOU BOTH FINISHED..?

BECAUSE I AM READY TO DIE IF NECESSARY.

YET, HAVE WE NOT COLLECTIVELY ENDURED ENOUGH DEATH?

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER?

SHE WILL NOT BE ACTIVE FOR SOME TIME.

THE ELECTRICAL IMPULSES TO HER BRAIN HAVE BEEN TRIGGERED IN A WAY TO INHERIT HER DEEPEST FEARS.

INCAPACITATE US THROUGH OUR DEEPEST FEARS.

BE THANKFUL I CHOSE... A DIFFERENT METHOD FOR YOU.

GIVEN MY HISTORY, PERHAPS IT IS *YOU* THAT SHOULD BE THANKFUL MY PAST IS NOT UNLEASHED UPON US.

I CANNOT JUST LEAVE HER HERE.

SHE CANNOT ENTER. YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE BROUGHT HER.

IT IS YOU THAT SHOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN IN MY SISTER, CASQUE. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH ANIKA?!

"YOU SPEAK IN ACCUSATORY TONES BUT ONCE MORE YOU SHOULD BE OFFERING YOUR GRATITUDE.

"I SHOWED HER HOW TO UNLOCK HER TRUE POTENTIAL...

"IT DID NOT COME WITHOUT GREAT STRUGGLE.

"YOUR BLOODLINE... THERE IS SO MUCH...RAGE.

"I KNOW YOU THINK OF ME AS A MONSTER.

"OF MY KIND AS WELL.

"THE BLACK DO NOT DWELL ON THE EMOTIONAL STATE OF LESSER BEINGS. IT IS NOT OUR NATURE.

"YET, ANIKA... SHE WILL BRING THE DAWN."

DAWN. LESSER BEINGS. YOU SPEAK OF THESE THINGS BUT YOUR KIND HAS ONLY EVER DWELLED IN THE FURTHEST REACHES OF THE DEPTHS. AWAY FROM THE BLUE AND HUMANITY ALIKE.

SOME MIGHT SAY IT IS THE BLACK THAT ARE THE LESSER BEINGS. WOEFULLY INEXPERIENCED IN THE VERY WORLD IT SEEKS TO DOMINATE.

YOUR INSULTS WILL NOT CHANGE ANYTHING YOUNG ONE

STOP CALLING ME THAT.

I AM YOUR PUPIL NO MORE.

UNDERWATER
SEA
SCUBA DIVING
YOU'VE... GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.
...DAD?
THE PROBLEM IS-- I KNOW THIS IS A DREAM. THAT THIS-- ALL OF IT-- CAN'T POSSIBLY BE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.
WOULD IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE IF YOU THOUGHT OTHERWISE?
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME WE'VE CAUGHT UP?
IT'S KIANI, DAD. SHE NEEDS ME.
THEY ALWAYS DO.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, DAUGHTER?
YOU KNOW...EVEN IN A DREAM YOU STILL HAVE A KNACK FOR KNOWING THE POINTED THING TO SAY.

MOM? YOU'RE HERE TOO?

YOU SEEM SURPRISED?

AT THIS POINT VERY LITTLE IS GONNA SHOCK ME ANYMORE.

SO...NOT AWKWARD AT ALL.

THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED RIGHT?

A NORMAL LIFE. FREE OF THE LIFE-SAVING B.S.

I-- UH... I NEVER. I MEAN...I THINK SO.

I MUST SAY I DO WONDER...WHAT COULD ASPEN POSSIBLY FEAR?

WHERE IS MY SISTER, CASQUE?

I CANNOT LET YOU USE MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD AS A TOOL FOR FURTHER GENOCIDE AND WAR.

MY FATHER MAY BE TOO FAR GONE, BUT ANIKA WAS NEVER GIVEN A CHOICE.

IT IS TOO LATE KIANI...

"YOU SEEK TO BE TREATED AS AN ELDER, YET RELINQUISHED WISDOM IN FAVOR OF A PATH THAT WILL LEAD TO YOUR FAILURE...

"ANIKA HAS RETURNED TO MURIA.

"THE ELITE COUNCIL IS NO MORE.

"THE CITIZENS MUST ANSWER TO A NEW HIGHER POWER...

"THEIR OFFSPRING MUST ACCEPT A NEW REALITY..."

A NEW FATE

MURIA, AS YOU KNOW IT IS OVER, KIANI.

I WILL NOT LET YOU CORRUPT ANOTHER OF US.

WE WILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT--

YOU MISTAKE YOUR PLACE

I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO LEAVE HERE.

SO THIS IS IT, THEN...

TIME FOR THE MASTER TO FALL AT THE HANDS OF THE PUPIL.

KIANI— THIS IS NOT THE WAY—

HRAAAH!

HNNNHHH...

SO BE IT.

HNNGHH!

PLEASE... NNGH... KIANI... WE MUST DO WHAT IS NECESSARY... AT ALL COSTS.

YOU... NNNNHHHHHHHHHHHH... DO NOT KNOW TRUE SACRIFICE.

AAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!

I AM SORRY IT MUST END THIS WAY.

YOU HAVE MADE A... NHHN... GRAVE MISTAKE.

THE BLACK WILL... NOT FORGIVE THIS.

YOU SET THIS COURSE IN MOTION, MY FRIEND.

I WILL MAKE IT QUICK.

NO, YOUNG ONE...MAKE IT WORTH IT.

PSHOOOM!

TO BE CONTINUED..

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#5

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PETER STEIGERWALD
ZEN

aspencomics.com

MOMENTS EARLIER, I KILLED MY MENTOR, CASQUE.

I HAVE KILLED SO MANY.

BUT, AT THIS MOMENT, GUILT IS NOT WHAT CONSUMES ME...

NEITHER DOES ASPEN'S WELLBEING. SHE WILL NOT DROWN. OF COURSE.

NO...WHAT CONSUMES ME...

...IS FEAR.

HSSS

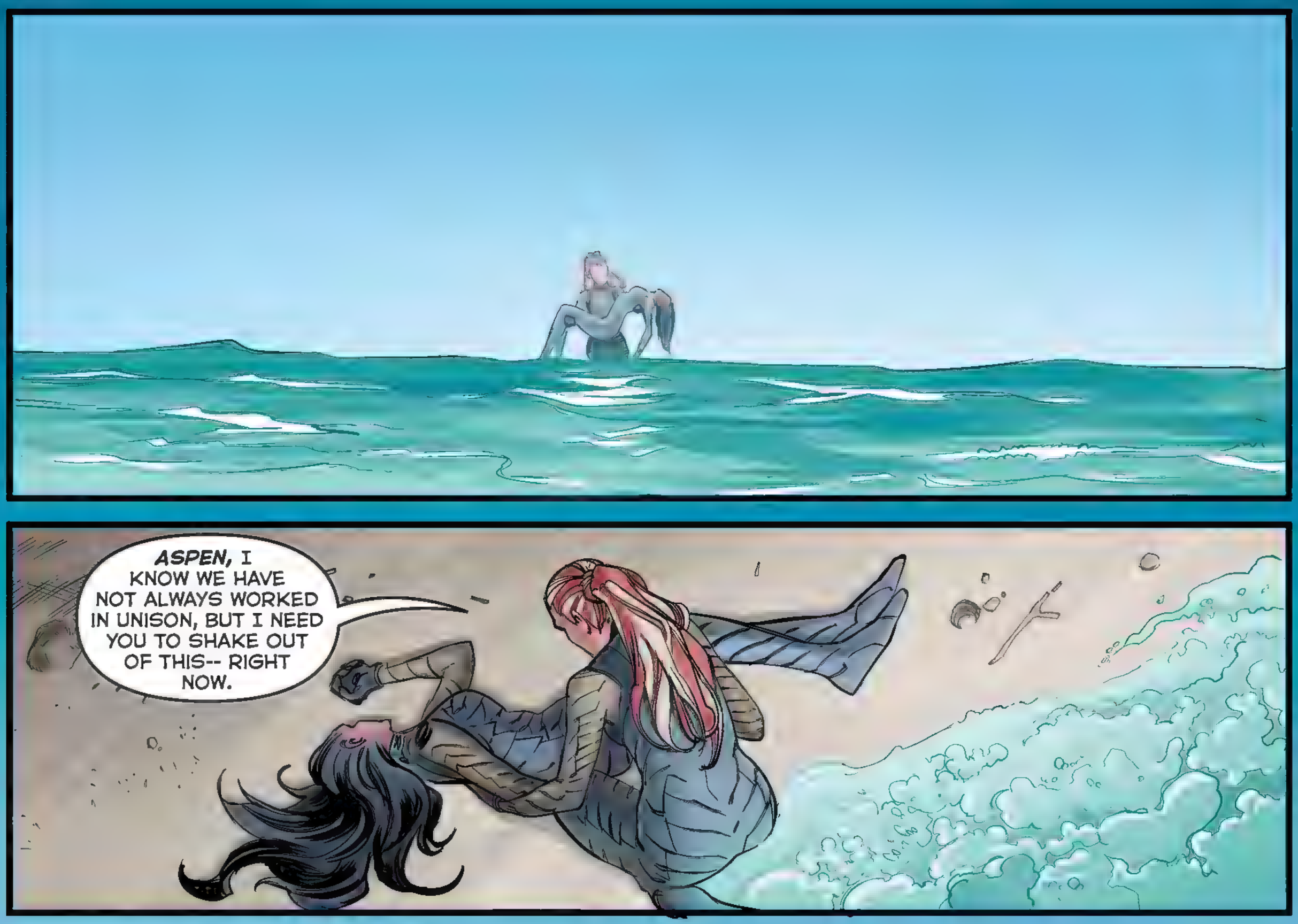
THE BLACK REMAIN ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION, AND I KILLED ONE OF THEIR HIERARCHY.

I HAVE FORCED A RESPONSE UNLIKE ANY THIS WORLD HAS EVER SEEN.

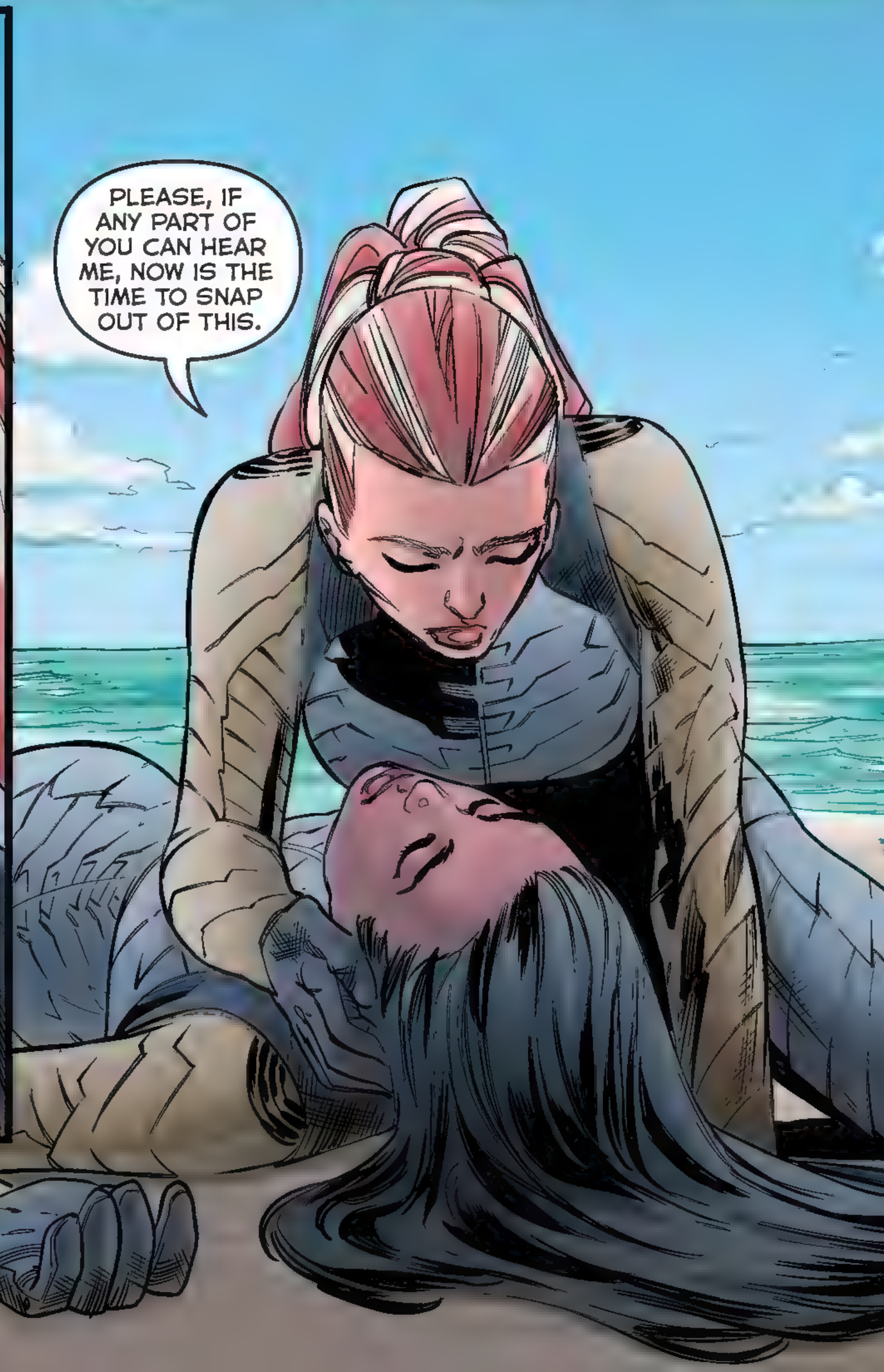
ONLY, THIS TIME--

--IT IS ONE OF US, THE BLUE, THEY WILL BE AFTER...

THIS COULD END EVERYTHING.


ASPEN, I KNOW WE HAVE NOT ALWAYS WORKED IN UNISON, BUT I NEED YOU TO SHAKE OUT OF THIS-- RIGHT NOW.

I HAVE DONE SOMETHING TERRIBLE.


PLEASE, IF ANY PART OF YOU CAN HEAR ME, NOW IS THE TIME TO SNAP OUT OF THIS.

YOU KNOW, YOUR FRIEND SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S IN REAL TROUBLE.

OKAY, THIS ISN'T FUNNY ANYMORE.

I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.

YOU WOULD LEAVE SO SOON? THIS IS EVERYTHING YOU WANTED.

I NEVER SAID THAT.

WE ARE PROJECTIONS WITHIN YOUR OWN MIND, ASPEN. EVERYTHING WE SAY YOU HAVE CREATED.

NO. I LOVE MY LIFE. FLAWS AND EVERYTHING!

THAT'S NOT WHAT IT SEEMS LIKE, HONEY.

SHE'S KILLED CASQUE.

THE BLACK ARE RISING.

SOME TEA, HONEY?

YOU MIGHT WANNA CHECK WITH YOUR FRIEND UP THERE.

LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GOTTEN HERSELF IN QUITE THE BIND.

WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY..?

WE ARE RISING.

I GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE.

ASPEN!

KIANI?!

ASPEN-- I NEED YOU--

--NOW!

ASPEN!

IT WAS SO REAL. YET SO DIFFERENT.

EVERYONE'S FEARS MANIFEST DIFFERENTLY, ASPEN. BUT, WITH CASQUE GONE, THE EFFECTS OF HIS HOLD OVER YOU HAVE BEGUN TO WEAR OFF.

CASQUE IS GONE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I KILLED HIM, ASPEN.

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY WE EVER WOULD'VE ESCAPED... ALIVE.

BUT NOW WE HAVE UNLEASHED SOMETHING FAR WORSE...

...THEY ARE COMING.

TAURO.

THIS ONE KNOWS NOTHING OF THE ANCIENT WAYS.

WHY WOULD YOU TAINT THE PURITY OF OUR COLLECTIVE WITH HER PRESENCE?

DO YOU NOT THINK HER KNOWLEDGE OF OUR ENEMY WOULD PROVE USEFUL?

DO NOT DO THAT...

DO NOT TURN THIS AROUND ON ME WITH YOUR CEASELESS QUESTIONS.

IF I MAY--?

SHUT YOUR MOUTH!

WOULD YOU SHUT YOURS FOR BUT A MOMENT?!

LOOK.

WHAT... IS THAT LIGHT?

BRRRRR

IT-- IT IS *THE BLACK!*

HRRRRAAAAAAAH!

*HHNNNN

NNNGGGHHH.

"ANIKA HAS BEEN TURNED BY THE BLACK.

"SHE IS NOW A CONDUIT FOR THEIR POWER."

"WE CANNOT HELP HER ANYMORE.

"MURIA IS LOST."

KIANI? I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT IS GOING ON?

CASQUE'S MURDER. IT WAS THE CATALYST THAT WILL TRIGGER THEIR ACTION. NOW NONE OF US ARE SAFE, ASPEN.

KIANI... LOOK.

THE WATER.

ASPEN... BE READY.

KRAAA

"ASPEN, EVERY ONE OF OUR KIND, THE BLUE, IS MOST LIKELY INCAPACITATED UNDER THE SURFACE.

"THE BLACK WILL NOT KILL US, BUT THEY WILL ALSO NOT ALLOW US TO CONTINUE.

"WE HAVE ENTERED A NEW DARK AGE."

"THEY WANT TO ENSLAVE US?"

"ASPEN...

"WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AT THEIR MERCY."

BUT... WE ARE GOING TO FIGHT THEM, RIGHT?

NATURALLY.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU TOLD ME YOU'RE NOT MUCH OF FIGHTER?

YEAH.

WELL, THAT'S NOT TRUE. YOU HAVE MORE HEART THAN ANYONE I'VE EVER MET. THAT IS WHAT A TRUE WARRIOR'S SPIRIT REQUIRES.

KIANI...

I TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT THE WATER SPEAKS TO US.

THAT IT IS OUR BOND. LINKING ALL OF US.

AND IT IS ALSO OUR WEAPON.

NOW, ASPEN...

INCREDIBLE.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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VOL. 8

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S

FATHOM

#6

OF 6

MAURI!

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COVER B

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MICHAEL TURNER

JON SIBAL

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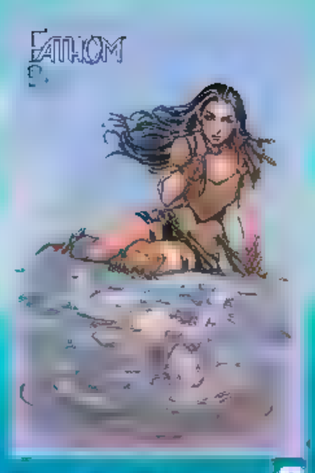

C

Retailer Variant Edition

by Siya Oum

There are two worlds, the one we know, and the one below...

The Black have risen.

Killian and the Blue have fallen.

Aspen Matthews and Kiani are united as one in defense of everything.

"Our Greatest Fear"

script Vince Hernandez

pencils Mauricio Campetella

lors Peter Steigerwald

lettering Zen

Fathom Volume Eight

Issue 6 of 6

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HISTORY HAS A CURIOUS WAY OF REPEATING ITSELF...

BUT, UNLIKE HISTORY...

...I DON'T REPEAT MY MISTAKES.

MOMENTS AGO, THE BLACK ROSE ONCE MORE, AND ONLY DEATH AND DESPAIR FOLLOW WHEREVER THEY GO.

MY SWORD...MY ESSENCE, HAS COMBINED WITH KIANI'S OWN WATER FORM-- WE ARE ONE.

CHOOM

OUR MINDS UNITED.

THE LAST TIME I FOUGHT THE BLACK IT WAS NEARLY AN EXTINCTION LEVEL EVENT THAT COST HUNDREDS OF LIVES-- BOTH HUMAN AND THE BLUE.*

AND I FOUGHT ON THEIR TERMS.

BUT...I AM NOT A WARRIOR. I'M A MARINE BIOLOGIST.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE FATHOM VOLUME 3.

AND TOGETHER-- OUR POWER IS NOT IN OUR BLADE BUT OUR BRAINPOWER...

THE WATER IS OUR STRENGTH, BUT MORE SO IT'S THEIRS, AS WELL.

SO WE WILL LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD-- LITERALLY.

AT THE VERY LEAST, THERE WILL ONLY BE ONE CASUALTY...

...MYSELF.

PUNISHER

THAT'S HOW WE'RE DOING THIS?

OH.

KIANI...I HOPE THIS WORKS.

"ASPEN...YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE SKILLED IN COMBAT TO USE THE ONLY ADVANTAGE YOU HAVE ON THE FIELD...

"YOURSELF.

"YOU MUST BE FAST, THE OCEAN IS NOT MEANT TO BE UP-ENDED IN SUCH A WAY."

HOW DO YOU ATTEMPT TO WAGE WAR WITH THE GODS?

BY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT I AM ONE MYSELF.

YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

"WE KNOW MORE OF YO[illegible]NG, A[illegible]

"WE ARE [illegible]ENTRAL IN[illegible]OF [illegible]

"CONNECTED [illegible]

"DO [illegible]

"THIS IS YOUR D[illegible]

"KILLIAN... FUSED WIT[illegible] OWN[illegible]E

"YET, YOU WENT FURTHER THAN EVEN THOSE WH[illegible] DESTINY. BECAME[illegible]

"AND IN DOING SO... MUST[illegible] Y[illegible]

"WE[illegible] ALL[illegible]

"ASPEN-- YOU KNOW HOW TO FIGHT THIS!

"YOU ARE STRONGER THAN THEM."

"IT IS NOT A [illegible] OF

"KIANI! THEY CAN HEAR US. THEY KNOW EVERYTHING."

NO!

CRASHHOOO

"HOW DO [illegible] ATTEMPT TO [illegible] TH[illegible]

TAURO.

"...THE WAR HAS A[illegible]."

IT... WORKED.

WIND.

AWAKEN. IT HAS BEGUN.

IT WAS THE BLACK. A MESSAGE TO ALL OF THE BLUE.

A... *NNGH*... WARNING?

A REMINDER.

THAT WE ARE ALL ONE. UNDER THEIR CONTROL.

YOU...KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN?

IT WAS PART OF THE PLAN, YES.

MANY THINGS ARE.

MERELIA... CAN YOU HEAR US?

KILLIAN...I... WARNED YOU OF THIS.

YOU...HAVE BROUGHT US DEATH.

YOU... ARE QUITE CORRECT.

"DEATH FOLLOWS ME AT EVERY TURN...

"BUT I HAVE LIVED THROUGH DARKNESS IN ORDER TO RISE...

"AND IN DEATH I WAS FUSED WITH THE GREATEST POWER THIS EARTH HAS EVER FELT.

"YOU SEE, I WAS NOT BORN OF POWERFUL ELITE BLOOD SUCH AS YOURSELF.

"YET, DESTINY CHOSE ME ONCE MORE...

"I JUST NEEDED TIME.

"AND A NEW CITY FOR OUR PEOPLE."

BUT, I AM THE ELITE BLUE--

--NO.

AAAAAAAHHHHHH...

I AM AN ELITE BLUE.

AIIIIIIIIIIIIIEEEEEEEE!!!

YOUR TIME HAS COME TO AN END, MERELIA.

REST IN PEACE KNOWING YOU SERVED THE BLUE IN OUR RESURGENCE.

OUR ERA HAS BEGUN.

NNNNH! IT'S NOT WORKING, KIANI!

NOTHING CAN GET THROUGH THEIR BARRIER!

WAIT... KIANI-- DO YOU FEEL THAT?!

"KIANI-- IT'S KILLIAN. HE HAS--"

"I SENSE IT AS WELL, ASPEN."

IT...

...IS OVER, KIANI.

"WE LOST."

THE BLACK ARE NOT HERE TO FIGHT.

BECAUSE IT'S TOO LATE, KIANI.

THEY'RE RIGHT. WE CAN'T STOP ALL OF THEM. THE BLACK. KILLIAN. ANIKA. THE SURVIVING BLUE. ALL WE HAVE DONE IS CAUSE MORE OF THEM TO PERISH ALONG THE WAY.

WE ARE NOT THEIR MASTERS-- EVEN IF WE ARE OF THE BLUE OURSELVES. IF THIS IS THE PATH THEY COLLECTIVELY CHOOSE. WE MUST LET THEM...GO.

"WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ASPEN?"

"LET THE OCEAN GO."

"WE HAVE TO FIGHT!"

"IT'S ALREADY OVER, KIANI! THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO FIGHT!"

"OKAY, ASPEN."

ASPEN..?

NOT USED TO THIS FEELING...OF HELPLESSNESS.

BUT YOU CAN ONLY FIGHT FOR SO LONG. AT SOME POINT...IF THIS IS WHAT THEY WANT. WHO ARE WE TO CONTROL ENTIRE CIVILIZATIONS?

WE ARE THE WARRIORS.

IF WE DO NOT-- NO ONE ELSE WILL.

BESIDES. WE MAY HAVE LOST THE BATTLE, BUT THE WAR RAGES ON.

AND I STILL HAVE A SISTER TO HAVE WORDS WITH.

IT WAS AN HONOR TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE YOU, ASPEN.

NEVER DOUBT YOUR WARRIOR'S SPIRIT-- IT IS FIERCE.

THANK YOU.

IT'S A FRIGHTENING WORLD ONCE MORE...

...THE BLACK... THE BLUE...WHO KNOWS WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT.

BUT, FOR ONCE I KNOW WHERE I STAND IN ALL OF THIS...

FAR ABOVE ALL OF IT.

EPILOGUE.

MR. CALLOWAY, RIGHT THIS WAY.

MY PLEASURE, ADMIRAL DRUCKER.

HE WANTED TO BE SURE THE TIME WAS RIGHT.

I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THIS FACILITY WAS DECOMMISSIONED?

YES... AND NO.

DING

THE OFFICIAL REPORT CLASSIFIES THIS FACILITY AS "DEAD" BUT THAT'S PART OF THE CHARM, YOU SEE.

HE'S READY FOR YOU.

ADMIRAL MAYLANDER... SIR.

MR. CALLOWAY. IT'S BEEN SOME TIME.

I TRUST THIS MATTER IS OF SOME IMPORTANCE, THEN?

OUR WORST CASE SCENARIO HAS TAKEN EFFECT. MATTERS HAVE FORCED OUR HAND.

I SAW. WITH THIS MANY PIECES AT PLAY, I DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN--

BECAUSE YOU DON'T LOOK WHERE I AM WILLING TO, MR. CALLOWAY.

OUR FELLOW RIVALS IN RUSSIA AND JAPAN RECENTLY PROVIDED US WITH ANSWERS ON WHAT TO DO...WITH THE DEAD. HOW TO HARNESS SOMETHING MORE FROM THEM.*

*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE FATHOM VOLUME 7.

AS WELL AS HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN ***ELITE BLUE.*** IT'S DUE TIME FOR HUMANITY TO PUT THEIR PETTY CONFLICTS ASIDE TO FIGHT A GREATER ENEMY. MY PEOPLE.

ASPEN'S BROTHER? I'M IMPRESSED SIR.

DON'T BE. HE WAS AN OBVIOUS PLAY. TRAPPED IN THE CONFINES OF THE ENEMY. HE JUST NEEDED TO BE SAVED.

BUT, IT WAS ***SIPHON*** THAT I WILL BE PROUD OF.

WHILE THE REST OF THEM BENEATH THE SURFACE KILLED THEMSELVES TO CONTROL THE LIVING, I USED MY CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES TO ACQUIRE THEIR DEAD.

WE'RE DONE PLAYING THE VICTIMS, MR. CALLOWAY. WE ARE THE GREATEST NATION IN THE WORLD AND IT'S TIME WE TOOK OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE ONCE MORE. NO MATTER THE COST.

BREEP

WE WILL USE THEIR OWN AGAINST THEM.

IT IS TIME FOR HUMANITY TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE.

THE END.